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SUBJECT: WADE'S POST-U.N. DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (U) On October 1, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade gave a rambling, two and a half-hour press conference where he detailed his participation at the 62nd UN General Assembly meeting in New York and his other meetings and activities during his September trip to the United States. He opined that the situation between the United States and Iran is not yet ripe for mediation but said he will continue to engage the Iranian authorities to encourage them to dialogue with the United States. Wade urged that a seat with veto power be awarded to Africa on the UN Security Council. Announcing that he will travel to Harare within two weeks, Wade argued that South African President Thabo Mbeki alone cannot deal with the crisis in Zimbabwe and that more African heads of state need to be engaged. Wade also announced that Senegal would be receiving discounted fuel from Iran, Nigeria, and Equatorial Guinea and that companies from Iran, Dubai, Nigeria, and the United States are planning to build fuel depots in Senegal. He also raised Senegal's stalled MCC program and other development issues to be reported septel. End Summary.

THE IRAN NUCLEAR QUESTION IS NOT RIPE FOR NEGOTIATION  
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¶2. (U) Wade said that while Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had agreed to Wade being an intermediary with the United States, President Bush's preconditions made this a difficult undertaking. Wade explained, "My goal is for the two to talk to each other." He emphasized that he is not discouraged and would include Teheran in his itinerary when he travels to the Middle East in the next few days to discuss the agenda of the March 2008 Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Dakar. He underlined his belief that the tripartite approach regarding Iran's nuclear program is not working and that more countries need to be included in those discussions.

A UN SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT FOR AFRICA  
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¶3. (U) Asked about Security Council reform, he said Africa must speak with one voice and demanded an African seat with veto power. He said it is an injustice that the continent is not represented when the majority of the Council's discussions are about Africa and its problems. He argued that developed countries should not impose on Africa which country should be its representative, but added that Senegal's preference is Nigeria.

#### SENEGAL MAY PULL OUT OF DARFUR

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¶4. (U) Commenting on the situation in Darfur where Senegal lost another soldier during a September 30 rebel attack, Wade said he will order an investigation into this latest death and if it is proven that the Senegal soldiers were poorly armed and unable to defend themselves, he will withdraw Senegal's entire peacekeeping contingent. He declared that it was on Sudan's insistence that he had agreed to provide 450 police officers and to increase Senegal's presence in peace-keeping operations - "because they trust us" -- but warned that he will not send Senegalese soldiers to their death. He opined that this weekend's attack undermines international confidence in Sudan's commitment to a larger peace operation.

#### THE ZIMBAWE CRISIS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO SOUTH AFRICA

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¶5. (U) Responding to a South African journalist in English, Wade said, "South Africa is a goodwill neighbor, but the crisis should not be left to President Mbeki alone to resolve." He noted that, despite all of Mbeki's engagement with Mugabe, little progress had been made. Wade said that he had met with President Mugabe in New York and is planning to travel to Harare within two weeks. He added that the Zimbabwean question should be tackled with the inclusion of many African heads of state, arguing "we should have an official position about Zimbabwe; this has not been the case so far." Wade said he is taking this initiative to alleviate the suffering of the Zimbabwean people and to mediate between Mugabe, the opposition and the United Kingdom prior to next year's election.

#### COMMENT

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¶6. (SBU) Wade's press conference was a diplomatic spectacle to demonstrate to the Senegalese people and his African audience the

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respect he is afforded by world leaders. The two hour plus show seemed to be a response to the growing protests he faces from his opposition in Senegal, who attended and publicly heckled Wade during his address to the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington (Wade did not mention this during his press conference, however, and was dismissive when a Senegalese journalist made reference to the incident). The opposition is currently campaigning internationally to denounce his weaknesses in the areas of good governance and democratic reforms. Wade is hoping to assuage the anger of some of his disillusioned people with prestigious diplomatic moves. By announcing large commercial deals with foreign partners, Wade seems to be seeking to distract the Senegalese from the economic problems ordinary people face (or at least reassure them that things will get better soon.) By focusing most of his remarks on Iran, Darfur, the UN Security Council seat and Zimbabwe, Wade is burnishing his credentials as a statesman and a world leader. Moreover, the tone of his remarks and past comments suggest a desire to demonstrate that he and Senegal are as integral to solving crises in Africa as Mbeki and South Africa.

PIAZZA